

The Most Beautiful Woman I've Ever Seen

You were the most beautiful woman I've ever seen. You reminded me of me. Half your face from behind the denim jacket of some bald-headed Anglophone, eyes curving into the half-moons that mine make when I laugh, hair streaming, streaming like a piece of the universe. Like instead of being born miniature, wrinkly, wet like the rest of us, your mother made you with her hands, picking for your hair the raw darkness of midnight just above the ocean. You couldn't tell by looking that your laugh was forced. You could tell by feeling, though. You'd practiced, I know, in front of a cracked mirror, some of your sister's lipstick like a red tattoo as you flirted with the spotted glass. Your practice showed. The way you let your lips curl so wide that I could see a flash of gums, that's what made it look real; that's how I laugh. I used to hate when people caught that moment of abandon on camera instead of a measured smile of pure whiteness, but now I know that I am the most lovely when I let my measurements go.

To read the full essay, purchase Issue 1 of The Lindenwood Review.